

SPORTING GROUP

Chessie comes out of the water and shakes, he is just slightly damp. He has no long hair on his sides, face, or legs to trap the water. In the winter, water doesn't freeze on his coat, and he doesn't swamp the hunter's blind. His coat repels the water, much like a duck's feathers.

A Chesapeake is a camouflaged dog. He comes in all shades of brown from the light dead grass that hide him in the winter wheat fields, to the brown of the muddy banks of the lake, to the red of the sedge grass that grows along the lakes. His color suits him for all working conditions. He is the color of his background that makes his undetectable in an open blind.

The Chessie in the show ring does not have the high-stepping gait of a flashy dog, but he moves smoothly, exuding power and grace. He exhibits a keen, friendly temperament, with tail waving, ears up, and a happy grin on his face. He moves easily from field to show ring.

—Audrey Austin,
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Curly-Coated Retrievers

We are fortunate this month to have Aubrey LaCrosse share her thoughts with us, and while reading her interesting article it reminded me of how fortunate we are to

have such interesting dog activities now available to us.

VERSATILITY IN THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

The dictionary defines versatility as *capable of or adapted for turning easily from one to another of various tasks, fields of endeavor, etc.*

I have found the majority of Curlies fit this definition well. The breed standard reads: "The Curly is wickedly smart and highly trainable and, as such is cherished as much for his role as loyal companion at home as he is in the field."

Curlies have been bred for years to go from the field to the fireplace along with their humans. I don't find Curlies to be specialists. The breed, as a whole, is good at many things. Some breeds cannot make the transition like the Curly can. Being a very trainable and adaptable breed, Curlies are very attuned to their owners. They know what their jobs should be at what time. There is a time to hunt and run and play, and also a time to be calm and quiet.

Being a lower-drive dog than some of the other retrievers, one might have to work a little harder to get the drive and flash that some competitors want. However, when asked to compete in performance events such as agility or obedience, Curlies are able to compete with

the best of them. Being able to go from the dock-diving pool to the rally obedience ring and then to the breed ring is something that Curlies are good at.

Versatility in performance events can showcase this talent. Any dog who can compete in multiple venues is an asset to the breed. Breeders should take this into consideration and continue to produce dogs who can go from the show ring to the field and any other venue their owners want to participate in. Not only does this show the biddable and trainable nature of the dog, but also the stable and solid temperament Curlies should have.

A dog who is skittish and not able to adapt to changing environments will not be able to successfully compete. Dogs who notice every subtle change in their surroundings will be too distracted to give their handlers 100 percent focus that is required to successfully compete in agility or obedience. Good dog trainers can work around this sensitivity, but having the solid, "OK in its own skin" temperament makes this easy.

Correct socializing as a puppy can help create an adaptable dog. The average person should be able to raise a stable-tempered Curly and make a respectable member of society.

A dog who has learned to work with and for his owner can successfully do any dog sport

the handler desires. The Curlies I have personally known love to work to please me. Sure they like their treats and to play with toys, but a sincere "Good Girl!" or some loving goes a long way. Making me happy was what made them want to perform. And I had to make sure I wasn't faking it either! They are wickedly smart and know the difference. —Aubrey LaCrosse

Thank you so much, Aubrey, for reminding us that Curlies can have fun in a variety of activities.

—Ann Shinkle,
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 Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America

Golden Retrievers SAILING GOLDEN SEAS

Up the gangplank and out to sea. Golden Retriever trained assistance dogs and their disabled owners boarded a Royal Caribbean Line (RCL) cruise ship in 2016 as part of the fourth biennial Service Animal Cruise.

Launched in conjunction with Paws With a Cause (PAWS), a non-profit assistance dog agency in Michigan that trains Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, the 2016 cruise saw 56 people and 10 dogs registered for the trip; dog owners, spouses, a few puppy